

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Most or Flanagan - Interior 5634

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NEAR-RECORD UNITED STATES COMMERCIAL FISH CATCH IS INDICATED

A near-record United States commercial fisheries catch in 1961 is indicated by statistics just compiled in the Department of the Interior. Preliminary data prepared by the Fish and Wildlife Service's Bureau of Commercial Fisheries point toward a total United States catch of over 5 billion pounds of fish and shellfish for the year. The 1960 catch was estimated at 4.9 billion pounds.

The 1961 catch, although larger than 1960's, will be less than the record 5.3 billion pounds taken in 1956, but may equal or exceed the second highest catch of 5.1 billion pounds taken in 1959, the Department said. The figures for 9 months in 1961 show an increase of 209 million pounds--about 6 percent--over the same period of last year. Record catches of menhaden, king crabs, and possibly sea scallops, are expected. However, landings of herring, sardines, and shrimp will be far below normal.

Menhaden landings of 2,130 million pounds show an increase of 269 million pounds over last year's catch for the same period. One reason for this increase is a stepped-up fishing effort due to an improved market for fishmeal, a menhaden product.

The Alaskan catch of salmon for 1961 totaled about 262 million pounds, a gain of 55 million pounds over 1960. The landings of tuna in California, including shipments of fish caught by United States fishing boats operating off South America, totaled about 281 million pounds during the period from January 1 to November 4. This is up over 30 million pounds from last year.

Shrimp landings in the South Atlantic and Gulf States, however, were down 37 percent. Shrimp fishermen in these States had caught 126 million pounds by the end of October, a drop of 75 million pounds. During the first nine months of 1961, landings of whiting at Gloucester, Mass., totaled 44 million pounds, down eight million pounds when compared with the same period for 1960.

Jack mackerel landings also were lower, but Pacific mackerel, halibut, haddock, and scallops were considerably higher than last year's catch over the same period.

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